

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D. C. 20554**

In the Matter of

Rules and Regulations Implementing
Minimum Customer Account Record
Exchange Obligations on All Local and
Interexchange Carriers

CG Docket No. 02-386

**BELLSOUTH CORPORATION
REPLY COMMENTS**

BELLSOUTH CORPORATION

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BellSouth Reply Comments
CG Docket No. 02-386
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. THE RECORD DEMONSTRATES A CLEAR NEED FOR THE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY, MINIMUM STANDARDS GOVERNING THE EXCHANGE OF CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION FOR LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATIONS.	1
A. Customer Service Record (“CSR”) Response Times	2
B. Local Service Request (“LSR”) Response Times.....	4
II. THE COMMISSION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY, MINIMUM INFORMATION EXCHANGE STANDARDS FOR ALL LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATIONS.....	6
III. A SINGLE SET OF MINIMUM FEDERAL STANDARDS IS PREFERABLE TO MULTIPLE STATE RULES AND GUIDELINES.....	7
IV. ADHERENCE TO THE ATIS LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATION GUIDELINES SHOULD BE JUST ONE COMPONENT OF ANY INFORMATION EXCHANGE STANDARDS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION.	9
V. COMMENTERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREE THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD NOT REQUIRE ANY PARTICULAR FORMAT, CODES, OR TRANSMISSION MEDIUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION.....	14
VI. CONCLUSION.....	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is significant evidence in the record demonstrating that basic customer account information is not being provided in a timely manner by all local exchange carriers (“LECs”) when end users seek to switch local service providers (“LSPs”). As a result, customers are experiencing delays in establishing service with their newly chosen LSPs. BellSouth submits that the Commission can address this problem by establishing minimum standards for the exchange of end-user customer account information between LECs for all local service migrations. The Commission’s legal authority under the Communications Act to adopt such standards is clear.

Moreover, a single set of national information exchange standards is not only consistent with the Commission’s recent adoption of mandatory, minimum standards in the context of changes involving an end-user’s presubscribed interexchange carrier but also will serve the public interest by allowing consumers to enjoy the full benefits of local competition. In addition, a national approach to the exchange of customer account information for local service migrations will minimize the burdens imposed upon carriers by avoiding compliance with divergent state rules.

BellSouth proposes that any rules adopted by the Commission require all LSPs to comply with the Local Service Migration Guidelines already established by the Ordering and Billing Forum (“OBF”) of the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (“ATIS”). Although BellSouth supports the use of the Local Service Migration Guidelines for all LEC-to-LEC migrations, it urges the Commission to go a step further and specifically acknowledge that a 24-business hour interval for LEC responses to customer service record requests is reasonable

and adopt a requirement that all LSPs provide access to clear and consistent business rules and change management processes. BellSouth submits that these additional obligations will create a more comprehensive set of standards to ensure the seamless and timely migration of local service customers between LSPs than adherence to the Guidelines alone would.

The parties unanimously agree that the Commission should not mandate the use of particular formats, codes, or methods of transmitting data to facilitate local service migrations. The Commission did not adopt such a mandate in the *CARE Order*, and it should take the same approach here. By focusing on ensuring the timely exchange of accurate and reliable information rather than the particular format or transmission medium, the Commission will allow providers to maintain flexibility and will avoid imposing unnecessary expense and burden on carriers, especially small and rural carriers.

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BellSouth Corporation, by counsel and on behalf of itself and its wholly owned subsidiaries (collectively "BellSouth"), respectfully submits these reply comments in response to the *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* ("*Further Notice*") in the above captioned proceeding.¹

I. THE RECORD DEMONSTRATES A CLEAR NEED FOR THE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY, MINIMUM STANDARDS GOVERNING THE EXCHANGE OF CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION FOR LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATIONS.

Contrary to the assertions of commenters such as CompTel/ALTS, Cox Communications, Inc. ("Cox"), and MCI, Inc. ("MCI"),² there is a demonstrated need for federal minimum standards governing the exchange of end-user customer account information for local service migrations. As described in detail below, BellSouth, AT&T, SBC, and Verizon all provided

¹ *Rules and Regulations Implementing Minimum Customer Account Record Exchange Obligations on All Local and Interexchange Carriers*, CG Docket No. 02-386, *Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 20 FCC Rcd 4560 (2005) ("*CARE Order*" or "*Further Notice*").

² CompTel/ALTS Comments at 2; Cox Communications, Inc. ("Cox") at 3-4; MCI, Inc. ("MCI") Comments at 3.

evidence of problems and delays experienced when trying to migrate end users from Old Local Service Providers (“Old LSPs”).³

A. Customer Service Record (“CSR”) Response Times

When an end-user customer chooses a new LSP, the New LSP will request that customer’s CSR from the end-user customer’s Old LSP so that the New LSP can initiate the carrier-to-carrier aspect of local service migration. This step is essential in obtaining information critical to the migration process because the New LSP must have the CSR information before it can prepare a complete and accurate Local Service request (“LSR”) that must be sent to the Old LSP in order to migrate the end-user customer.

In its comments, BellSouth provided data which showed that, during the period January 2005 through May 2005, 6.5% of the CSR requests submitted by BellSouth to Old LSPs were never answered.⁴ During this same period, over 31% of BellSouth’s CSR requests submitted to Old LSPs took three calendar days or longer before BellSouth was provided the necessary CSR to complete the end-user customers’ request for service.⁵

³ Cox states that “when a LEC acquires a new customer, it does not necessarily need to communicate with the customer’s old service provider to establish service, to ensure that the appropriate carrier provides service, or to ensure that the customer is billed appropriately for the service it receives.” Cox Comments at 4. This statement reflects a complete misunderstanding of the process for migrating end users from one local service provider to another. In order to facilitate a local service migration efficiently and effectively, the New LSP needs to obtain customer account information from the Old LSP. The information gathered from a CSR request is then used to complete a local service request (“LSR”), which is necessary in order to notify the Old LSP that the end user is switching to a new LSP. To suggest that LECs do not need to communicate and coordinate with one another in order to facilitate a local service migration is illogical. If the New LSP fails to obtain necessary customer account information, it cannot submit a complete and accurate LSR. If the New LSP does not submit an LSR to the Old LSP, the customer is unable to migrate to the New LSP.

⁴ BellSouth Comments at 4 (citing Affidavit of Faye Renfroe (“Renfroe Aff.”), ¶ 6).

⁵ *Id.*

SBC provided similar data to demonstrate the problems it has experienced when migrating end users from competitive local exchange carriers (“CLECs”). According to SBC, for the time period January 1, 2004 to August 31, 2004, 15% of SBC’s CSR requests in the state of Michigan were completely ignored.⁶ During this same period, it took three or more calendar days for SBC to receive responses to 40% of its CSR requests.⁷

AT&T also documented the difficulties it has faced in obtaining customer account information from other LSPs in a timely manner in order to facilitate local service migrations.⁸ According to AT&T, its agents “routinely get resistance from CLECs, ranging from unworkable CLEC-established intervals for responding to a CSR request (*e.g.*, thirty-day interval without an option to expedite), to simply ignoring AT&T’s numerous requests.”⁹

Verizon described experiences similar to those above. Verizon explained that, when a customer in Verizon’s eastern region moves from a CLEC to Verizon, “it takes about 2-3 days longer on average just for Verizon to receive a customer service record from a CLEC.”¹⁰ Verizon further stated that “with some CLECs the delay can be considerably longer and the amount of effort and expense required by Verizon to get complete and adequate customer account information can be substantial.”¹¹

⁶ SBC Comments at 3, n.7.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ AT&T Comments at 11-13; Declaration of Sandra Butler Buchanon and Denise Decker, Attachment B to AT&T Comments, ¶¶ 8-15; Declaration of Joel Spina, Donna Osborne-Miller, Adam K. Asbury, Noriko Wilson & Kathryn Lytle, Attachment A to AT&T Comments, ¶¶ 14-20.

⁹ AT&T Comments at 11.

¹⁰ Verizon Comments at 4.

¹¹ *Id.*

Although MCI seems to suggest that there is no need for mandatory minimum standards to ensure the timely exchange of customer account information, it previously told this Commission a different story in the *Triennial Review* proceeding. In testimony filed just last October, MCI complained that “the average time to retrieve a CSR from other carriers is longer than three days, and only 50% of requests are completed in a timely fashion.”¹²

B. Local Service Request (“LSR”) Response Times

BellSouth and others also submitted significant evidence that some LSPs frequently fail to provide timely responses to local service requests. As BellSouth explained, during the period January 2005 through May 2005, 39.9% of LSRs sent by BellSouth as the New LSP to Old LSPs went unanswered for three days or longer.¹³ Stated in terms of “significant customer impact,”¹⁴ this statistic translates to 21,817 end-user customer lines that were unreasonably delayed when migrating their local service from the end-user customers’ Old LSPs to BellSouth.¹⁵

According to SBC, for the time period January 1, 2004 to August 31, 2004, the average LSR response time for all CLECs in the state of Michigan was 6.6 calendar days. About half of the CLECs took five or more calendar days to respond, while another 12% took between 16 and 29 calendar days to respond.¹⁶

¹² Declaration of Sherry Lichtenberg on behalf of MCI, Inc. at 6, Attachment D to Comments of MCI, WC Docket No. 04-313; CC Docket No. 01-338 (filed Oct. 4, 2004).

¹³ BellSouth Comments at 6 (citing Renfroe Aff., ¶ 7).

¹⁴ *CARE Order*, 20 FCC Rcd at 4568, ¶ 18.

¹⁵ See Renfroe Aff., Exhibit 1 at 2. Of these 21,817 customer lines, the LSR response times and number of affected customer lines were as follows: (1) three to four days for 8,385 customer lines; (2) five to six days for 5,722 customer lines; (3) seven to ten days for 4,285 customer lines; (4) 11 to 15 days for 1,890 customer lines; (5) 16 to 20 days for 636 customer lines; and (6) 21 to 30 days for 899 customer lines.

¹⁶ SBC Comments at 4, n.9.

AT&T also cited problems experienced regarding CLEC responses to LSRs. These problems include carriers failing to provide guidance on the format for an LSR through clear and concise business rules as well as failing to create or follow their own standard interval for responding to LSRs from other LSPs.¹⁷

* * *

As demonstrated above, there is ample evidence in the record to support the adoption of minimum standards for the exchange of end-user customer account information for all local service migrations. It is not enough that some LSPs are “good citizens” and provide end-user customer account information for local service migrations in a timely manner. All carriers must fulfill their obligations to share complete and critical information without undue delay.

In the related *CARE Order* in which the Commission adopted standards for the exchange of information between LECs and IXC for changes affecting an end-user’s presubscribed interexchange carrier (“PIC changes”), the Commission was persuaded by evidence that “basic customer account information that carriers require to ensure accurate billing of end user customers and to execute end user customer requests in a timely manner [was] not being provided by all LECs and by all IXCs.”¹⁸ Similar circumstances exist here – critical customer account information is not being shared in a timely manner by all LECs. Accordingly, it is appropriate to impose information exchange requirements upon all LECs. By mandating such standards, the Commission will ensure that all consumers receive the flexibility and benefits afforded by competition in the local exchange market, minimize customer confusion and complaints, and ensure that no carrier is placed at a competitive disadvantage.

¹⁷ AT&T Comments at 13.

¹⁸ *CARE Order*, 20 FCC Rcd at 4562, ¶ 1 (emphasis added).

II. THE COMMISSION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY, MINIMUM INFORMATION EXCHANGE STANDARDS FOR ALL LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATIONS.

The Commission has clear authority to adopt minimum information exchange standards applicable to all local service providers for LEC-to-LEC migrations. Any claims to the contrary are legally flawed and inconsistent with precedent. For example, the New York State Department of Public Service (“NYDPS”) suggests that the Commission lacks the legal authority to enact nationwide rules.¹⁹ This assertion is baseless.

The Commission’s legal authority to establish minimum requirements for local service migration is clear. As the Supreme Court has held, Section 201(b)²⁰ of the Communications Act grants the Commission general rulemaking authority in all areas affecting local competition.²¹ Moreover, Section 251’s obligations are not limited solely to incumbent local exchange carriers (“ILECs”). Rather, this statutory provision includes duties imposed upon all LECs that are designed to foster competition in the local exchange market.²² The creation of national standards for the exchange of end-user customer account information for all local service migrations will help promote local competition by requiring all LSPs to exchange necessary information.

In addition to the authority described above, Section 258 vests the Commission with the power to establish mandatory minimum standards for the exchange of end-user account

¹⁹ See New York State Department of Public Service (“NYDPS”) Comments at 2, 4.

²⁰ Section 201(b) provides that “[t]he Commission may prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary in the public interest to carry out the provisions of this chapter.” 47 U.S.C. § 201(b).

²¹ *AT&T v. Iowa Utils. Bd.*, 525 U.S. 366, 378 (1999) (“We think that the grant in § 201(b) means what it says: The FCC has rulemaking authority to carry out the ‘provisions of this Act,’ which include §§ 251 and 252, added by the Telecommunications Act of 1996”).

²² See, e.g., 47 U.S.C. 251(a) (General duty of telecommunications carriers); 251(b) (Obligations of all local exchange carriers).

information for local service migrations. Section 258 prohibits any telecommunications carrier from submitting a change in a subscriber's selection of a provider of telephone exchange service except in accordance with such verification procedures as prescribed by the Commission.²³ The Commission has found that its authority to adopt regulations under this provision in order to prevent anticompetitive conduct regarding carrier changes extends "to all telecommunications carriers in connection with changes to all telecommunications service, including local exchange service."²⁴ The Commission expressly found that it had "authority under section 258 to address concerns about anticompetitive preferred carrier freeze practices for intrastate, as well as interstate, services."²⁵ A LEC's failure to exchange necessary customer account information in order to facilitate a change in local service providers is equivalent to an anticompetitive PIC freeze because customers are held hostage under both situations. Thus, Section 258 of the 1996 Act also is a source of authority for the adoption of minimum information exchange standards applicable to all local service providers for LEC-to-LEC migrations.

III. A SINGLE SET OF MINIMUM FEDERAL STANDARDS IS PREFERABLE TO MULTIPLE STATE RULES AND GUIDELINES.

There are significant advantages to a single set of minimum national standards to govern the exchange of end-user customer account information for local service migrations. First, by establishing a national framework, the Commission can ensure that all LECs are obligated to

²³ 47 U.S.C. § 258(a).

²⁴ *Implementation of the Subscriber Carrier Selection Changes Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; Policies and Rules Concerning Unauthorized Changes of Consumers Long Distance Carriers*, CC Docket No. 94-129, *Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 14 FCC Rcd 1508, 1514, ¶ 6 (1998) (emphasis added) ("*Second Report and Order*").

²⁵ *Id.* at 1579, ¶ 117 (emphasis added).

share necessary customer account information in a timely manner – not just those that are subject to state performance standards (*e.g.*, BOCs) or state local service migration rules that have been adopted in only a “handful”²⁶ of jurisdictions. State rules governing LEC-to-LEC migrations are certainly the exception, not the rule, as the process to establish such rules is often tedious and protracted. As AT&T pointed out, “the New York CLEC-to-CLEC rules were developed over a two-year period.”²⁷ In addition, BellSouth has noted that, although discussions about local service migration rules in Florida began in 2002, rules have yet to be finalized three years later.²⁸ Clearly, the process for developing state end-user migration rules is typically a lengthy one that may not even result in the establishment of rules.

Second, the adoption of national information exchange standards would avoid subjecting carriers to disparate rules. As AT&T explains, the guidelines adopted by the NYDPS “are Verizon-region specific, and they are not designed to recognize other protocols or systems for other ILEC regions or carriers.”²⁹ BellSouth agrees with AT&T that “states’ efforts, while laudable, have nevertheless become problematic because of their inconsistencies.”³⁰ Compliance with divergent state rules is far more burdensome than adherence to a single set of national standards, especially for small carriers. The Commission has already recognized that “national rules will greatly reduce the need for small carriers to expend their limited resources securing their right to interconnection, services, and network elements to which they are entitled under the 1996 Act.”³¹ Consequently, it is preferable to establish a single set of national standards for the exchange of customer account information than proceed on a state-by-state basis.

²⁶ AT&T Comments at 18.

²⁷ *Id.* at 16.

²⁸ BellSouth Comments at 18, n.46.

²⁹ AT&T Comments at 16.

³⁰ *Id.* at 18.

³¹ *Implementation of the Local Competition Provisions in the Telecommunications Act of*

Third, national rules would not necessarily eliminate or nullify a state's authority to adopt state specific requirements designed to support local competition. Any national rules adopted by the Commission could serve as a "floor."³² As BellSouth explained in its comments, the Telecommunications Act permits the coexistence of federal and state requirements addressing local service migration. Generally, inconsistent state local service migration requirements should be considered for preemption on a case-by-case basis. However, state requirements that frustrate the exchange of minimum customer account information, or that conflict with industry standards and procedures, should be categorically preempted.³³ By simply mandating the timely exchange of minimum customer information that is required to switch LSPs, the Commission will likely solve most of the problems end-user customers currently encounter when changing providers.

IV. ADHERENCE TO THE ATIS LOCAL SERVICE MIGRATION GUIDELINES SHOULD BE JUST ONE COMPONENT OF ANY INFORMATION EXCHANGE STANDARDS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION.

Nearly all parties support the use of the Local Service Migration Guidelines ("Guidelines") established by the Ordering and Billing Forum ("OBF") of the Alliance for

1996; Interconnection Between Local Exchange Carriers and Commercial Mobile Radio Service Providers, CC Docket Nos. 96-98 & 95-185, *First Report and Order*, 11 FCC Rcd 15499, 15531, ¶ 61 (1996).

³² National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates ("NASUCA") Comments at 4.

³³ Preemption of a state's more restrictive requirements might be warranted if a state: (1) promulgates rules effectively prohibiting or restricting the exchange of minimum customer account information; or (2) establishes rules that conflict with industry standards which the Commission may have encouraged the industry to follow. The possibility of inconsistent state action in this area does not require the Commission to mandate the use of particular codes for local-to-local migration, as BellSouth advises against in Section V. below. Instead, the Commission should simply mandate the timely exchange of minimum customer information that is required to switch LSPs, which, in turn, will solve most of the problems end-user customers currently encounter when changing providers.

Telecommunications Industry Solutions (“ATIS”)³⁴ for the exchange of customer account information. Although BellSouth urges the Commission to require all LSPs to use these Guidelines to facilitate end-user migrations, it believes that the Commission should establish additional requirements that go beyond the Guidelines.

In its comments, BellSouth recommended that, in addition to compliance with the Guidelines, the Commission mandate the following:

- *Timely CSR Response.* At a minimum, a 24 business-hour³⁵ response interval by the customer’s Old LSP for CSRs received via facsimile or e-mail. On-line or near real-time electronic access should be encouraged when economically and technically feasible.

BellSouth believes that it is appropriate to define a timeframe for LEC responses to CSR requests in order to ensure prompt action. In the absence of a specific timeframe, LECs may still lack incentive to act in a timely manner. The 24-business hour interval is a reasonable and generous timeframe for LECs to respond to CSR requests from other LSPs. As BellSouth indicated in its comments, BellSouth typically responds to electronic CSR requests within seconds. Notwithstanding the stringent standards for CSR responses imposed upon BellSouth and other BOCs by state commissions, BellSouth is not asking the Commission to hold CLECs to these same standards. A 24-business hour interval is reasonable because it does not require CLECs to invest in mechanized systems to meet this timeframe. Nevertheless, it does establish a parameter that would minimize the delays that customers often experience today when trying to switch local service from a CLEC to another LSP.

BellSouth also proposed that the Commission require the following:

³⁴ BellSouth Comments at 10-11; AT&T Comments at 5, 19-25; SBC Comments at 6-7.

³⁵ Twenty-four (24) business hours is equivalent to approximately two and a half to three business days.

1. *Timely return of Rejects/Clarifications and FOCs from the customer's Old LSP upon receipt of an LSR from the New LSP.* Consolidated, rather than serial, clarifications should be provided, where feasible, in order to avoid delay.³⁶ For example, if an LSR is clarified and contains multiple errors, the clarification should list all errors on the LSR rather than on separate clarifications for each error. Separate clarifications result in additional processing time and delays in meeting the customer's expected date for the change in LSPs.
2. *Reasonable due date intervals by the Old LSP for the completion of the end-user customer's change of local service.* (For example, three days for non-designed loops).
3. *Establishment and publication of consistent, complete, and reasonable business rules and other information by all LSPs to ensure that requests are processed accurately and efficiently, preferably on-line.* The business rules should be clearly organized and readily accessible.
4. *A requirement that all LSPs establish a reasonable change management process for issues affecting local service migrations.* This process should provide LSPs with the ability to achieve timely implementation of reasonable requests for changes to electronic and manual processes that impact the New LSP's ability to process a migration request. This change management process should be well documented, clearly organized and readily accessible, preferably on-line.
5. *Adherence to industry standards, procedures, and rules for local number portability ("LNP") and preferred provider freeze (or local service freeze), such as those that have been established by The North American Numbering Council ("NANC"), Number Portability Administration Center ("NPAC"), the Commission, and state regulatory commissions.*

BellSouth submits that the additional requirements set forth above will provide a more comprehensive set of standards to ensure the seamless and timely migration of local service customers between LSPs than adherence to the Guidelines alone would. These additional requirements are not burdensome and, in fact, should be part of most providers' current business operations. For example, all providers should have clear and consistent business rules that are readily available to other LSPs and reasonable change management processes in place today.

³⁶ *Further Notice*, 20 FCC Rcd at 4588, ¶ 80 (asking whether a carrier should be required to identify all errors at once, rather than serially, in order to avoid delays).

Unfortunately, that is not the case. To ensure that all LSPs are operating on a level playing field, have access to necessary business rules and processes, and adhere to existing industry standards (e.g., LNP, etc.), the Commission should incorporate the above requirements into any information exchange standards it adopts in this proceeding.

If the Commission requires compliance with the ATIS Guidelines as advocated by most commenters, it should not change or dilute the existing Guidelines. For example, the Commission should not limit the exchange of information between LSPs to customer billing name and address only as requested by TDS Telecommunications Corp. (“TDS”).³⁷ According to TDS, additional information such as directory listing information, calling features, vertical services, and similar “line level” information is unnecessary in order to migrate an end user.³⁸ This assertion is flawed.

As an initial matter, the exclusion of such information from any data exchange conflicts directly with the Local Service Migration Guidelines developed by OBF. These Guidelines expressly state that a CSR request must include specific account level and line level information.³⁹

³⁷ See TDS Comments at 6.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ According to the Guidelines, account level information includes: (1) billing telephone number, complete service name and address (including floor, suite, etc.); (2) complete billing name and address (where required by state regulatory guidelines); (3) directory listing information including address, listing type, etc. when requested. Line level information includes: (1) Working telephone number(s); (2) current preferred interexchange carrier for interLATA and intraLATA toll calls, including freeze status; (3) local service freeze status, if applicable; (4) all vertical features (e.g., custom calling, hunting, etc.) and options (e.g., Lifeline, 900 blocking, toll blocking, remote call forwarding, off-premises extensions, etc.); (5) service configuration information (e.g., resale, UNE-P, unbundled loop); (6) identification of any services on the end user’s line (e.g., line splitting, Internet service, etc.); (7) Exchange Carrier Circuit ID

Account and line level information is far from unnecessary or superfluous. It is essential in order to ensure a customer's seamless transition to a New LSP. The Guidelines require the exchange of more than customer billing name and address; therefore, it is clear that the cross-section of telecommunications carriers that developed the Guidelines recognized the critical need for such data. Limiting the data exchange to customer billing name and address, instead of the more comprehensive data required in the Guidelines (*e.g.*, directory listing; vertical features; service configurations; etc.), would do nothing to improve the delays and difficulties experienced by customers and LECs today when an end user is switching his or her local service provider. Thus, the Commission should require LSPs to use the Guidelines developed by the industry, not a scaled back version.

BellSouth neither supports nor opposes the creation of a national list of LEC contact information as proposed by AT&T.⁴⁰ BellSouth recognizes that there are a number of unanswered questions regarding the creation, operation, and maintenance of such a national list (*e.g.*, who will be the entity responsible for creation and maintenance of the list? who will fund?). Notwithstanding these open questions, BellSouth agrees with AT&T that LSP contact information should be readily available.⁴¹ In fact, every local service provider should be required to establish and maintain a website that contains its business rules to ensure that CSR and LSR requests are processed accurately and efficiently. Moreover, the following information should be included in a local service provider's business rules: (1) specific information on the company's procedures for CSR requests and the submission of LSRs; (2) the company's hours of

("ECCKT") with associated telephone number when available and eligible for reuse. ATIS-0405300-0001, Local Service Migration Guidelines, Issue 1, § 8-2 (Oct. 28, 2004).

⁴⁰ See AT&T Comments at 26-27.

⁴¹ See *id.* at 23.

operation; (3) a contact list for making CSR requests and submitting LSRs; and (4) a contact list for escalations.⁴² While a national LEC contact list may be a viable tool in the future, in the absence of such a list, the Commission should require all LECs to provide complete business rules and basic contact information on their websites.

V. COMMENTERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREE THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD NOT REQUIRE ANY PARTICULAR FORMAT, CODES, OR TRANSMISSION MEDIUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION.

There is unanimous consent that the Commission should not mandate the use of particular formats, codes, or methods of transmitting data⁴³ to facilitate local service migrations. Contrary to the assertions of CompTel/ALTS and Cox,⁴⁴ BellSouth is not advocating the mandatory use of CARE (“Customer Account Record Exchange”) or specific codes for LEC-to-LEC migrations. CARE is a process specifically designed for the exchange of customer account information between IXC’s and LECs for transactions affecting an end-user’s presubscribed IXC. While BellSouth encourages the Commission to adopt mandatory standards for the exchange of customer account information for local service migrations in the same manner as it did in the *CARE Order*, BellSouth is not proposing that the Commission apply CARE to local service migrations or mandate the use of specific codes for the exchange of information. BellSouth agrees with SBC that “[s]o long as all LECs participate in the process and provide the requisite

⁴² See *id.*

⁴³ See, e.g., BellSouth Comments at 15; CompTel/ALTS Comments at 6-7; SBC Comments at 7-8; TDS Comments at 2.

⁴⁴ See CompTel/ALTS at 6-7; Cox Comments at 2.

customer account information, LECs should retain the flexibility to decide which formats, codes or transmission medium are best for the seamless and timely exchange of information.”⁴⁵

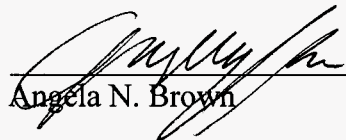
VI. CONCLUSION

All local service customers deserve to have their requests to switch local service providers honored in a timely and seamless manner. However, that is not the case today due to the failure of some LSPs to exchange complete customer account information in a timely manner. In order to promote competition, facilitate consumer choice, and minimize anti-competitive behavior by LSPs, the Commission should adopt mandatory minimum standards for the timely exchange of end-user customer account information between LSPs for all local service migrations.

Respectfully submitted,

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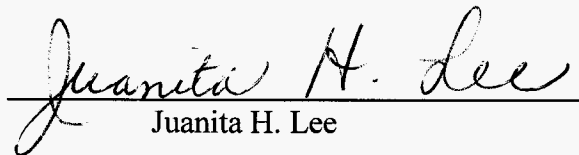
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⁴⁵ SBC Comments at 8.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that I have this 1st day of August 2005 served a copy of the foregoing **BELLSOUTH CORPORATION REPLY COMMENTS** by electronic filing and/or by placing a copy of the same in the United States Mail, addressed to the parties listed on the attached service list.



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